

**What is claimed is:**

1. An apparatus for use in monitoring spaces affording restricted access, comprising:  
an access panel including a door; and  
a cage attached to said access panel, said cage having a plurality of openings  
5 for ensuring fluid communication between an interior portion of the cage and a surrounding space.
2. The apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein said cage comprises expanded metal.
3. The apparatus as recited in claim 1, and further comprising an environmental sensing device secured to said cage.
4. The apparatus as recited in claim 3, wherein said sensing device comprises a smoke detector.
5. The apparatus as recited in claim 3, wherein said sensing device comprises a heat sensor.
6. The apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein said cage is welded to said access panel.
7. The apparatus as recited in claim 6, wherein said access panel further includes a frame, and said cage is welded to said frame.
8. The apparatus as recited in claim 1, and further comprising a shelf

disposed in the interior portion of said cage.

9. The apparatus as recited in claim 8, wherein said shelf is comprised of metal.

10. The apparatus as recited in claim 9, wherein said shelf is comprised of expanded metal, and is welded to said cage.

11. The apparatus as recited in claim 8, and further comprising at least one environmental sensing device disposed on said shelf.

12. The apparatus as recited in claim 11, wherein the at least one environmental sensing device is attached to an underneath surface of said shelf.

13. A method for monitoring environmental conditions in a space affording restricted access, comprising:

placing an access enclosure through an opening in a wall adjacent to said space, the access enclosure comprising an access panel including a door and a cage  
5 attached to said access panel, said cage having a plurality of openings for ensuring fluid communication between an interior portion of the cage and a surrounding space;

disposing an environmental sensing device within said interior portion of the cage; and

10 opening said door to inspect or test said environmental sensing device.

14. The method as recited in claim 13, wherein the step of disposing the environmental sensing device within the interior portion of the cage includes a further step of securing the environmental sensing device to a shelf within said

interior portion.

15. The method as recited in claim 14, wherein the step of securing the environmental sensing device to said shelf includes a step of attaching the environmental sensing device to an underneath surface of the shelf.

16. The method as recited in claim 13, wherein said space comprises an elevator hoistway.

17. The method as recited in claim 13, comprising the further step of maintaining normal operations in said restricted space while the inspecting step is performed.

18. The method as recited in claim 17, wherein said restricted space comprises an elevator hoistway, and said normal operations comprise continued operation of an elevator disposed within said elevator hoistway.

19. A method for monitoring environmental conditions in a space affording restricted access, without entering said space, comprising:

opening a door in an access enclosure from a second space adjacent to said restricted access space; and

5 inspecting or testing an environmental sensing device disposed in said access enclosure.

20. The method as recited in claim 19, comprising the further step of maintaining normal operations in said restricted space while the inspecting step is performed.